

# **THE MINUTES OF THE WARRANT COMMITTEE MEETING MARCH 31, 2004**

*Handout(s) given out tonight:*

1. *Transfer request for Buildings Department \$35,000*

Members absent: Member Oates

Also present: Selectman Anne Marie Mahoney, Selectman Paul Solomon, Town Administrator Mel Kleckner, Treasurer Susan Freiner, Town Accountant Barbara Hagg, and Ralph Jones sitting for Scott Stratford.

Chairman Widmer called the meeting to order at 7:41 PM.

## ***Acceptance of Minutes***

The Committee discussed and the minutes of the March 10, 17, and 24, 2004 meeting.

- *Member Heigham made a motion, Members seconded said motion, and the Committee unanimously voted to accept the minutes as amended of the March 10, 17 and 24, 2004 meetings.*

Passed out the Reserve Fund transfer request from Kevin Looney for a \$35,000 that will be discussed next week.

Member Schafer received a communication from Gerry Missal that the School Department may need \$39,000. She said the request has been sent to Superintendent Holland. This may be a hit on the Reserve Fund.

## ***FY05 Budget Discussion***

A comprehensive list of all the legal costs over the past four years was distributed by e-mail to all WC members. Current budget for FY05 is \$325K (this includes the additional \$50K). This is the major wildcard in next year's budget. Chair Widmer attempted to have the WC reach a consensus on legal services cost allocation for the FY05 budget. After much discussion, the Committee voted to fund the Legal Services in FY05 at \$359,000.

- *9 in favor, six opposed.*

The WC then with a motion from Member Fitzgerald voted to confirm the BOS vote for the distribution of the remaining available funds to the town budget. Again, with many divergent opinions, there was a vote:

- *11 in favor, 3 opposed, 1 abstain*

### ***Oil Release Subcommittee Recommendations***

Hofmann as chair of the subcommittee stated that the new estimate now stands at \$1.414M. School had expected to have surplus of \$100k but this in flux (see Member Schafer notice of possible \$39K transfer for the school below). The following are the Subcommittee recommendations: certified free cash \$362K. Health Insurance Trust \$308K, (after some questions, Town Administrator Kleckner feels that this is available), Capital projects leftover funds \$75K. This gives \$845K total, \$550K more needs to be covered. NESWC funds are now at \$2M, & the subcommittee is recommending this for use (with Mel's approval). Kendall funds are not being recommended at this time. Nor are Capital Endowment Fund, since this is not considered appropriate. Sub Committee felt that the additional state aid should be used, but it is no longer available. Borrowing is possible but the time frame is tight & Treasurer does not recommend. Also committee would like to have all the funds available at year end in Reserve to be used for this purpose.

- *Member White motion to accept the subcommittee recommendation, Phil seconded, and it was voted unanimous.*

### ***Claflin Street Parking Lot***

This was initially a mega project with a structure on Claflin street (Mel) but there was no support . Now the scope is to expand the initial parking into the street and some private property that the store owners now have adjacent to the street and parking lot. The scope has decreased but the fire station project is making this parking very important. The original project cost is \$287K, \$80K from Locatelli, leaving \$207 from Town. CBC would like to borrow & pay down over 5 years or take from Kendall reserves as other mega projects have been taken. BOS has recommended that this should not come from the CBC total funds. This will include the cost of the new parking meter machine. New revenues of \$9K per year (additional spaces) will cover the added cost. Annual bond cost \$43K starting in FY06. CBC is definitely interested in opine of BOS and WC before they act. BOS did not specify what the source of funds should be. Treasurer discussed the debt service cost of \$43K per year. Robie feels that this is a smaller project that is an appropriate use of Kendall funds. Treasurer also feels that State House notes would be another good funding option. There is a net gain in parking spaces. There will be some free and some metered spaces. We are not taking over the Locatelli parking lot, only the place that there are shrubs and the street...this is where the new metered spaces are. All will be part of municipal parking except right next to the stores. Brusch would like to see this funded 50/50 by private funds. Member Brusch stated that there are never any fewer than 15 empty spaces, except during December. Merchants that are benefiting should be paying for this upgrade. Member Heigham feels that this adds to the feeling that Belmont is business unfriendly. Solomon says that by delaying the project there will be a deficit of 25 spaces and if we don't get moving it will not be available when the fire stations are started. Hopefully when old fire station is sold, this will be a new restaurant or other business that will need new parking. Member Tillotson wanted to know amount of

foregone revenue from Locatelli when he gives up the land. Wally says the business downtown is mostly banks. In Concord & Lexington, there is loads of parking and signage & we are business unfriendly. We have to invest to keep our downtown viable. Peg also agrees that the merchants should kick in. What is the neighborhood reaction to this? Mel stated that the neighbors were represented on the Committee.

- *Hofmann made a motion to support the project. Unanimous (White seconded)*
- *Widmer out of Kendall or Borrowing. Hofmann made a motion, Geoff seconded.*
- *Not out of annual CBC budget. Unanimous.*
- *\$145K if the project is 50/50 2 in favor*
- *\$207K if only \$80K 12 in favor*

***Other***

Pension Obligation Bonds – Retirement Board would like to be involved.

Mel stated that everything needed by the end of next week for the articles and WC report.

Meeting adjourned 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Hagg  
Town Accountant &

Recording Clerk